

From: Katherine Poulos <Katherine.Poulos@tn.gov>

Sent: Monday, June 10, 2019 10:23 AM

To: Blew, Jim <James.Blew@ed.gov>

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Subject: Compass Community Schools - CSP Eligibility

Dear Jim,

Thank you for the discussion on May 29, 2019 regarding the eligibility of Compass Community Schools to receive CSP funds in light of the US Department of Education's non-regulatory guidance (Charter Schools Program Nonregulatory Guidance (updated January 2014) [MS Word](#) (203 KB)).

Specifically, we appreciate your guidance that there is no conflict between the Department's guidance in Item F-4, and Compass Community Schools' lease with the Diocese of Memphis, both of which are excerpted below:

- CSP Nonregulatory Guidance Item F-4. states "Generally, this means that a charter school may lease space from a religious organization so long as the charter school remains non-religious in all respects, including its programs, operations, and physical environment. Most importantly, a landlord affiliated with a religion may not exercise any control over what is taught or displayed in the charter school. 20 U.S.C. 7221i(1)(E)."
- The schools' lease includes provision 5.2(a)(ii), which states that the schools shall not "directly advocate, promote, teach or support a position considered gravely immoral by the Roman Catholic Church at the Premises as determined by the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Memphis," and that the schools "shall not remove any

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permanently attached statue, crucifix or other religious symbols from the Premises or Building. Additionally, no permanently attached statue, crucifix or other religious symbols on the exterior of the Building shall be covered."

In addition to your guidance that Compass Community Schools is not ineligible for CSP funding based on these provisions, we have also received from Compass Community Schools a revision to the lease which is attached and acknowledges that "Compass schools are Tennessee public charter schools and must adhere to all Tennessee state laws and standards." and that these schools "are recipients of federal grant funds" and must "remain in compliance with applicable federal and state laws, written guidance, and policies."

Thank you for your guidance during this process.

Warm regards,

Katie



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